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764 Kwoma culture defines the persons who shall dispose of and mourn for the dead. The relatives of the deceased gather to place his body on a platform where it is exposed for several months. Then the members of the subtribe attend a second funeral, for the ceremonial disposal of the bones, and a feast, after which the adult males celebrate the end of the mourning period at the house tamberan with gong, flute, and dance.

571 These, then, are the variously constituted groups and categories of persons as defined by Kwoma culture. They provide the framework into which a child is born and in terms of which he has to learn to act.

114 The hamlet in which our house was built, and hence the one from which we gathered most of our information, is called Rumbima. It is situated on a mountain ridge near the geographical center of Hongwam subtribe. (See map.) The men of Rumbima claim descent from the giant fish hawk and hence belong to the *Haiyamakwo* sib. They divide themselves into two lineages, the larger claiming descent from the culture hero Mangwiyow, and the smaller from Wasahof.

Mangwiyow is reputed to have had five sons, each of whom sired a family line. Our house was built among the dwellings of the living descendants of these five brothers. The oldest living male in the line whose houses were nearest us was named Wof (household 1, family line 2).[18] He dwelt a few yards from our hut with his first wife Kaya, his levirate wife Chinuwa, his adopted son Mey (a nephew), his adopted daughter Buka (a niece), and his stepson Kum (Chinuwa's son by her former husband). Wof is a man of about forty-five[19] whose skin is grey and scaly from tinea. He has the reputation of being a powerful sorcerer.

Adjacent to Wof's house is the rather dilapidated dwell-

[18] Households are presented both on the map and on the household chart. Family lines may be found on the lineage chart.

[19] Since the Kwoma had no method of counting years, the ages given are rough approximations based on the physical appearance of the individual and on his estimated age at the time of the tribe's first fleeting contact with Europeans, the members of the Behrmann expedition of 1913. (See W. Behrmann, *Im Stromgebiet des Sepik* [Berlin, 1922].)

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881 561 elaborate and protracted ceremony which takes place approximately once every five years. For this reason, a boy's initiation may not correspond exactly with his physiological pubescence. If he is within a year or two of pubescence when a ceremony is to be held, his father and paternal uncles tell him that he is big enough to join. They do not force him to enter at this time, but they make it clear to him that he will not have another chance for five years. Thus a courageous lad may undergo initiation before pubescence, while others may be too frightened to respond to the first call and may consequently not be initiated until some time after the onset of puberty.

The whole subtribe participates in the age-grade ceremony, and all the boys from every hamlet who answer the call go through the rite together. The initiates gather in the early afternoon and march to a stream at the foot of the ridge. Each initiate is then chosen by an unrelated man who [608] [304] has already completed the cycle, and who thereby becomes the boy's *ceremonial father*. This older man slashes the tongue and penis of his *ceremonial son*, and then rubs salt or ashes in the wounds. The blood is allowed to flow down the stream out of the territory. Following this, the initiates of the previous three grades are cut in the same way by their *ceremonial fathers*, each grade submitting separately and in order of age. The sponsors and the youngest grade of initiates then go to the house tamberan, leaving the three [292] older grades behind at the stream. The men tell the women, who are waiting at the house tamberan dressed in grass skirts,[1] that the other initiates have been killed, whereupon the women wail. By this time it is late afternoon, and the initiates who are present dance until dark, when the other three [535] grades appear bearing torches. They dance around the house tamberan until the torches have gone out, whereupon the women join in a dance which continues throughout the night. [786] On this occasion ceremonial sexual license, within the limits of the incest taboos, is permitted to everyone but the youngest initiates. At dawn the women return to their homes to

[1] This is the only time that women wear clothes other than their net bags.

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cook and the men go to the bush. Here each *ceremonial father* gives his *son* an ornament which symbolizes the latter's grade. The youngest grade receives a bamboo phallocrypt and a plaited belt to hold it in place. The other grades receive decorative combs of increasing elaboration. In the afternoon the women gather again at the house tamberan with the food they have cooked, and the initiates parade in front of them wearing their ornaments. After the meal, a dance similar to the one of the previous night begins and continues throughout the night, again accompanied by sexual license. On the following morning all ceremonial debts are settled; young men pay their *maternal uncles* shell money for the privileges they have gained from the relationship, and young husbands the bride-price which they owe their wives' relatives.

Following this prolonged rite, the youngest grade goes into seclusion in a small house erected near the house tamberan. They must avoid being seen by women for about two months. Food is brought to them by men, and they must wear the phallocrypt whenever they leave the house. The boys engage in hunting competitions during this time, but otherwise do not perform any economic tasks. A small ceremony marks the end of the seclusion period, when each boy puts his phallocrypt over a growing bamboo shoot, which in time splits the ornament and is supposed to symbolize and induce magically the growth of the lad's penis.

The ceremonial scraping of penis and tongue is related to the childhood custom of penis scraping performed by boys in private. Not only the act but also the stated purpose is the same. The Kwoma explanation for the ceremony is that it is to promote growth in the boys—"to help them grow up," as Kis explained to me. The splitting of the phallocrypt thus really symbolizes the purpose of the rite. Although the private rite of childhood produces no change in status, the age-grade rite does result in a marked advance in social position. After it, a boy becomes an adolescent and gains the privileges and immunities which Kwoma culture grants to persons in this category.

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of wood, but that the secret must be carefully guarded from the women and children. The sponsor then thrusts a roasted yam into the boy's hand and leaves him to dance by himself in the circling ring of men as he eats it.

The boy's dream of participating in the cult ceremonies is thus finally realized. From now on he may take his turn in the gong orchestra, taking care not to make a mistake lest he be shouted at and teased by the older men, and hoping to gain their praise for a perfect performance. Although adolescents are usually only permitted to beat the gongs while the simpler rhythms are being played, those who have shown a special aptitude during the practice sessions and who make no mistakes during their first few performances at the house tamberan may be permitted to try their hand at more complicated rhythms. Although few adolescents gain the skill necessary for a public performance on the flutes, they can put to use the secret dance practices of their childhood as they skip around the altar, their hands above their heads, their eyes on the wooden figures, and their bare feet rhythmically slapping the earth floor in unison with the other dancers. They may also join in the chorus which the dancers shout after each of the song leader's verses. Finally, they may squat with the adults as they drop out of the dance to smoke cigarettes, chew betel, and gossip.

The unfolding of the hoax of the cult does not destroy a Kwoma boy's belief in *marsalai;* it simply verifies his suspicion that the *marsalai* do not palpably visit the house tamberan at the time of the cult ceremonies. He still believes in the existence of these supernatural beings and does not doubt that they live in their special dwelling places and cause storms or "shoot" sago needles when they are disturbed. He is also impressed with the fact that these *marsalai* are responsible for a successful yam crop, and that the chief purpose of the yam cult ceremony is to insure their cooperation in producing a bountiful harvest.

An adolescent reacts toward his younger *brothers* in much the same way as he did during childhood. Indeed, a specific

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A man who has attained high prestige in the community and, in addition, has taken the head of an enemy, is asked to join *Nokwi*, the highest stage of the yam cult, and he thereby receives the greatest honor that a Kwoma man can attain. If he is able to achieve this mark of status, the final mystery of the *marsalai* is unfolded to him. He is told that the booming rhythm that he has always heard at the *Nokwi* ceremony is not the footsteps of the great female *marsalai* in whose honor the ceremony is held, but is a sound made by a huge water drum.[28] A man plants yams for the first time on the occasion of his initiation into *Nokwi* and learns from the cult members how to solicit the aid and coöperation of the *marsalai*, which are believed necessary for a successful yam crop.

The yam cult, in addition to being a mode of ranking men in accordance with their attainments and of providing a means of gaining the support of the *marsalai*, is the primary institution for artistic expression. It has been shown how the child secretly learns to play the gongs, to sing, and to dance, and how during adolescence he is formally taught these skills, first in the bush house and later at the house tamberan. During adulthood men vie with one another in demonstrating their accomplishments in these artistic techniques. A man who is superior in one or more of them gains high praise from the community; people speak of him as a *harafa ma malaka*. At the beginning of each ritual the participants examine the carved wooden figures on the altar and comment on their excellence, those who have made them standing by to receive the praise. Men who are adept at carving may expend considerable time and effort fashioning and painting the formalized wooden heads and figures which are supposed to represent the *marsalai* of the cult, in order to have them so displayed.

Men who show a talent for gong beating have the opportunity during the cult ceremonies to play the most sophisticated rhythms in the orchestra, and those who excel in com-

[28] The water drum is a hollowed log shaped like a canoe, truncated at both ends, suspended in water so that the lips are submerged, and beaten by a pole wielded by two men.

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796 794 533 posing rhythms become the orchestra leaders and may hum out a new arrangement to be interpreted under their directions by the gong-players. "Let's try this one—'gading gadong, gading gadong, kura kura, kura kura'," [26] he will say, and each player must know which part his gong should take and should be able to translate the words of the leader into the proper blows on the lips of the gong at the proper moment. Usually the leader merely suggests that a named rhythm be played, if the ritual permits such a choice, or, if not, simply directs the players. Good players are permitted to play only when the gong rhythms are the central part of the ritual, and the dubs and novices take their turn when the gongs are being used primarily to accompany the dancers, so that every member of the cult has an opportunity to perform on the gongs at some time during the ceremony. While those who play well are praised, those who are clumsy and inept are teased, criticized, and ridiculed.

[554]

796 794 535 554 Dancing during the cult ceremonies also provides an opportunity for a man to gain status. He may be applauded either for being a tireless, or for being a spectacular, performer. The man who can dance an entire night without ever sitting down to rest and smoke is spoken of as having "dry bones" and being "hard too much." Similarly, anyone who can join the dance with fervor when it is lagging and put new spirit into the performance is highly regarded. Once at a *Nokwi* ceremony, when a dance which had been going on for several hours had begun to lag, a man who had just arrived, adorned with particularly striking face paint and decorations, rushed into the circle balancing a spear over his head, stamping his feet on the ground, and shouting. The other dancers quickly caught his enthusiasm, the tempo increased, and loiterers joined in. Spectators shook their heads, smacked their lips, and allowed that he was indeed a man of parts.

794 796 533 Singing provides another means of self-expression during the ceremonies of the yam cult. The men blend their voices

[26] This is actually a formalized gong rhythm known as "the cassowary" and supposed to represent a hen cassowary and her chicks.

796
532 and told to whom they belonged. The two large ones belonged respectively
[123] to the "tultui" and the "lulusi" (pidgin for the native government repre
sentative and the village head man). We exclaimed over them and told them
they were "number one".

796 While we were being shown the figures a dance was in progress around
535 the alter. About half of the natives there were shambling around it,
[533] sometimes stepping from side to side in time to the beating of the gongs
[534] and sometimes merely walking, depending on whether or not the spirit moved
them. Sometimes everyone would be dancing; at all times at least two
of them were. The step was a sort of springy goose step, the beat emphasized
with a pause by the down-treading on one foot with the other in the air.
The raised foot was sometimes brought across in front of the other one, and
sometimes behind. In either case, the toes were pointed outward, and the
raised foot scraped along the ground. Coincident with the stepping, the
[415] body was twisted from side to side, particularly the shoulders. Practically
[276] all of the men held their betel gourds under their left arms and were
constantly dipping the spatulas in and sucking on them. Occasionally one
of the dancers would pick up a net bag (empty except for a withe inserted
around its edge to make it stiff and flatlike), hold it above his head
either in one or both hands, and twist it back and forth in harmony with
the contortions of his body. The dancers would drop in and out of the dance
at will, have a rest, smoke, take their turn at beating the gongs, and then
return.

796 For clothes, the older men wore nothing except arm and leg bands
291 (and not all of them wore these); necklaces of dogs' teeth; shell; hair
301 ornaments of feathers and combs; or a combination of these. Most of the
"finish timers" wore laplaps or shorts; one of them wore a laplap over his

796 around a framework. At the front and back ends, tilting toward the center,
346 were two huge masks, about four feet long and a foot wide. They were
778 beautifully carved and painted in black, white , red, and green. At the
[532] top of each mask was fastened what looked like feather work, a semblance of
[237] hair. Capping this were plumes similar to those worn by the dancers themselves.
The mask near the front was called asambwarí, and belonged to Waskuk (an old man of Waskuk actually owned it); the one at the rear was called abíwakwa and belonged to Bangua (actually to the cicatriser). The space between the masks on the top of the alter was covered with shell ornaments. A pumpkin seed shaped ornament of small cowrie shells fastened in rows on a woven or closely matted febric was called sawíwarí. Another was similarly constructed, but shaped as a crocodile, with two larger shells for eyes, and called no waski (no means crocodile). Plumes, cockatoo, pigeon, etc, were set in various
[535] places in addition to bit of yellow grass hung in bunches. Some of the dancers also wore this same yellow grass stuck into their arm and leg bands.

796 The front of the house tamberan had been hidden from view by a 6½' screen.
346 While it prevented the women and children from seeing the sacred precincts,
417 the men could and did stand up on the framework of the screen to look out onto the other side. The women and children were not to come until the next day, but some of the men, at least one anyway, were on the women's side. We did not dare look over the screen for fear of breaking some taboo.

796 After a few minutes, we were escorted to some seats (planks that had been
533 hewn from 2' x 6' x 8" logs, and roughly carved), and told that the singsing
[123] would begin soon. Some of the natives began to walk slowly and silently around
[352] the alter while the "luluai" of Bangua, (one of the Kwoma hamlets) Sowinambi, began a verse in a high voice which ended in a prolonged o on the same note and fell off to a wí with shorter duration, on a lower note. This verse was answered from the other side of the screen in exactly the same manner, but with different words to the verse.

996 This is a 'singsing nothing' (hongwaiiu). It seems to be a ceremonial
346 anger, for in a very few minutes I am told "he no got cross now", but the
[192] singsing keeps on in two groups, both singing different songs.

"Sowinambi comes up to me, taps his chest, and says, 'enji korumpé' (my sib). There are two hand prints on the first kwaté as high as a man can reach. These were made by Sowinambi who put black paint on his hands and left his prints, right and left--one hand for Waskuk, one for Bangus.
[177] (This is an innovation introduced by finish-timers who have signed contracts with their fingerprints.)

"In the center of the new structure there are three wooden slat beds. Around one are gathered a half a dozen men who are holding a small ritual. There are three men who stand out as leaders: War, Sowinambi, and Hogwat,
[537] representing the Rambima, Wanyabenkure, and Dawus sibs respectively. Each of these three takes a turn and sing-speaks as fast as he can until he forgets, or gets tongue-tied, or stops. War and Hogwat throw themselves
[535] into it more than Sowinambi who stands quietly. The former two dance and
[533] sway and gesticulate as they lead. The others and a few sitting close by on logs sing the owi chorus. In the midst of this some of the 'finish timers' and older men are indulging in a little rough horseplay consisting of sprinkling lime over the singlets or bare chests of each other. Old wrinkled 'leathernack' greets a middle aged man whom he sees sitting on a log, by approaching him and rubbing his kinagourd on the other's jaw. The gesture is returned. Men are sitting in the house tamberan on sticks or logs because the ground is still soft and muddy. It has not been packed down by many feet as in the older house tamberans.

"At about two P.M. the sun breaks through the heavy fog which has held through the morning. Sowinambi passes the word for food to be brought.

796 [534] sized trunk of a tree hollowed out and open at both ends. It is hung bottom up in the water and struck with a long heavy post wielded by two men.

The outline of another similar pit which has been filled in was seen beside the one now in use. This I was told had leaked badly. The new one has to be filled from any of several bamboo containers stuck under the 'benif' quite often.

[346] [778] In the house tambaran there is the same altar set up in the center with a small amount of shell money, two stubby bamboo flutes, and a wooden [538] [532] trumpet on top. Above it rises a 3' carved wooden figure of a woman. This is the woman for whom the ceremony is held. There is also a secondary [614] figure under the water drum less important than the one on the altar. These two are sugiliwas of the tug sib (Bangus).

Between 30 and 40 men are present when we arrive in the early afternoon. [535] [533] [534] They are singing and half-walking, half-dancing around the water gong counter-clockwise. The gong keeps up a steady boom-boom-boom with few interruptions even when new beaters relieve those who are tired. The men drop out from time to time to smoke or to chat so that no more than half are dancing while we are there. Later on in the evening we are told this is not so; everyone is dancing almost continuously. But the sun was hot and there were still many men to come, so it was being taken easily. Men from all of the Honuwem sibs are present and also a few men of Koriasi and [703] [178] [554] Koriasi Tangwishemp. Only four of these were "sawi talks". These four, however, wore the regalia of a homicide which seems to point to the fact that killing for prestige still goes on in spite of government prohibitions. [726] These men may have won their letter in the prearranged fight with a small hamlet of Koriasi about three years ago. Six of the latter, four of them women and children, were killed then. (We haven't got this story straight yet for we have only recently stumbled on it).